

REMARKS

On a PAMPHLET, intitled,

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THE MORALITY OF RELIGION,

In a LETTER to the B. of W.

By B. H.
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L O N D O N :

Printed for T. COOPER, at the *Globe* in *Pater-*
Noster Row, 1741.

Price six Pence.

1741

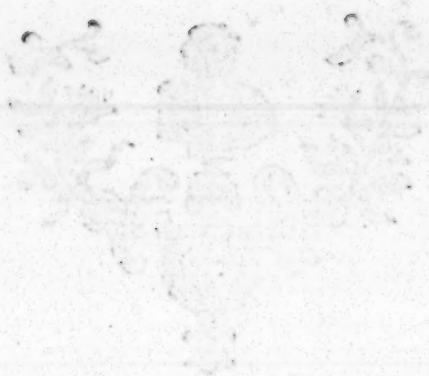
REMARKS

ON A FARTHER

THE MORALITY OF RESISTANCE

TO THE H. OF W.

BY B. H.



LONDON

Printed by T. Cooper, at the Old Man Press

To the B. of W.

MY LORD,

I Lately met with a Pamphlet intituled, *The Morality of Religion*, &c. in which the Author, under some specious Baits offer'd to Reason, hides a killing Hook to the Spirit of Religion.

His main Design is to move a Controversy on the Ground of our *Justification* with God; prosecuting which, he insinuates, in the Heart of his Work, a rotten Distinction, betwixt *Acceptance* and *Salvation*; asserts that Men are *accepted* by *natural* Means, but *save'd* by *divine*; makes a *false Attack*, as Besiegers often do, charges the Orthodox with laying down a false Position, viz. that *Faith, though a Man be destitute of Works, doth justify*, (which they never thought of) and, at the same time, really lays down a false Position himself, viz. that *if a Man have Faith, and moral Works also with his Faith; it is not, however, to his Faith, but to his said moral Works that his Justification is to be ascribed*, nay, that such Works *will justify even an Unbeliever*; whereas, the truth is, what St. James and St. Paul together have taught, and what the Orthodox have ever maintain'd, viz. that Faith is properly the Part, as to Man's Act, which justifies, though not, if

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he be destitute of Works, and though even Faith *be not perfected but by Works*; but, that, as for Infidels, they are intitled to no Justification at all. At the same time, by *Works* St. James, and after him all the Orthodox do mean, not only those which our Author understands, which are *moral*; but those which are properly *religious*, which he calls *positive*; which also by and through Faith, do justify; nay, which together with Faith do *sanctify*, and render acceptable to God, even those *other* Works call'd *moral*. For, that Works properly religious are available as aforesaid, the Apostle gives us an Example in the Patriarch *Abraham* offering up his Son *Isaac*: upon which he interrogates—*Was not Abraham our Father justified by Works, when he had offered up Isaac his Son upon the Altar? Seest thou, how Faith wrought with his Works, and by Works was Faith made perfect?* So, upon the whole, my Lord,

The Question mov'd betwixt this Author and the Orthodox is not, as he has put it, on the side of the latter, viz. *whether Faith, though a Man be destitute of Works, doth justify; but whether, if he have Works also with his Faith, it be not however his Faith to which his Justification is still properly to be ascrib'd*: which is to be maintain'd in the affirmative against all such as do hold, that *we are justified by Works of Morality on the Foot of a suppos'd eternal Law of Nature, necessitating God thus to act with*
 3 Men,

Men, i. e. to accept them for righteous, not on the Score of their *Faith*, as *their* part, but of their *moral Works*, as aforesaid: from whence it should follow, as this Author also does infer, that Persons of all Persuasions, *Jews*, *Mahometans* and *Pagans*, are all, in this respect of their *Acceptance*, on as good Terms with God, as his most faithful Servants. But, my Lord,

My Meaning is not here to draw up a full Answer to this strange Piece. I will only trouble your Lordship with a few Considerations on a Point or two, which the Author would pass upon us for *Fundamentals*. Such Considerations may not perhaps be necessary to your Lordship, but they may be of use, in due Time, to save some others from being surpris'd by false Fundamentals into Mistakes concerning *true* ones.

I know not who this Author is; perhaps your Lordship, who is more conversant in the World, may know. I can only guess, and may be mistaken: But, whoever he be, as his Performance is a kind of Summary or Digest of all the Errors that are the Snare and Burthen of our Time, I had a mind to draw up a few Remarks on that Part whereon the Rest of his Work is chiefly built; which also I am encouraged, for several good Reasons, to lay before your Lordship.

Your Lordship is generally allow'd to have the politest Taste, and to be the greatest Master of Reasoning, that this *most reasoning* Age has produc'd: By means of which Accomplish-

ments, with a Concurrence of other favourable Circumstances by the *Genius's*, *Studies*, *Situations*, and *Tempers* of your Adversaries, with their other Engagements or Obligations, and the Prevalence of some Tenets become fashionable to the Times, your Lordship (though engag'd from your Youth in Controversies on a great Variety of the nicest Subjects) has yet generally come off *Victor*; whence you have at length gain'd such an Authority to your Name; that, whatsoever Writings you shall now favour the World with, I am persuaded your Lordship will meet with little Opposition, or but from few of your old Antagonists; so that, I can think of no greater *Judge*, before whom to lay what I have to offer on the present Argument.

At the same Time, it is generally allow'd, that your Lordship, from a Candour and Largeness of Heart almost peculiar to yourself, has ever us'd, and lov'd to encourage in others, a Freedom of Debate, and free Communication of Studies and Opinions; wherefore also (though I may not perhaps be in some Things in the same Way of *thinking* with your Lordship, yet) I cannot but promise myself, you will not only favourably receive these few Notes, but will also confirm them with your declar'd Consent; or, if you dissent, will honour me with your Objections in writing, that, so, we may come to a Clearing of those first Points of our Author, which being else allow'd to pass on no good Grounds, other Tenets no less sound will be built

built upon them ; and so, Errors, like the Giants Mountains, be piled up one upon another, and for the same end, *i. e.* to assault Heaven. Add to all this,

That your Lordship and myself may perhaps be more nearly concern'd together in the Question principally agitated in *that Pamphlet*, than the World is generally aware of. But,

Not to trouble your Lordship with any farther Preface or Apology for this Address.

In the sixth Page of the said Pamphlet, the Author tells us in Substance, that “ The Scriptures are a Declaration of that Truth, which
 “ was not necessary *in itself* to be known, but
 “ which God was pleas'd to *make* so, not for
 “ *all Mankind* in general, but only *for those*, in
 “ particular, who have Capacity and Opportunity of knowing it ; that the said Scriptures
 “ were given to direct us, not in finding *natural*
 “ *or moral*, but *reveal'd* or *positive*, Truth :
 “ Which *reveal'd Truth* he makes to be *not the*
 “ *principal Thing*, but only what is *highly useful*
 “ *as a Means for the better Practice of that*
 “ *Truth, which is natural or moral* ; for that,
 “ the said *natural or moral Truth*, as the same
 “ *exists in the Light of our own Minds, irradiated upon them from that great Source of*
 “ *Light and Reason, even our own Thought and*
 “ *Consideration of the moral Attributes of God,*
 “ *taken and compar'd together with our own rational Nature and with our Dependance upon*
 “ *him*, is, as this Author is pleas'd to tell us,
 “ when

“ when carefully and duly attended to, *superior*
 “ *to reveal'd*; as it is *that constant and immu-*
 “ *table Rule to every Man, by which he is im-*
 “ *power'd to judge and determine even of the*
 “ *doctrines of Scripture themselves, whether they*
 “ *shall, or shall not be allow'd to have really come*
 “ *from God; as also, in what Sense they shall be*
 “ *allow'd to contain the Revelation of his Will.*”

And this, my Lord, altogether is what the ingenious Writer presumes to lay down as a *Postulatum*, or *Proposition*, which the gentle Reader may grant him, for clear and evident, if *he please*. But, my Lord,

As there are many Reasons wherefore one should not be over hasty in granting these same *Postulata* on Points clearly out of the Line of all Demonstration in a mathematical Way, I will examine a little this *Postulatum* before me; which indeed contains in it *two Propositions*, and therefore, after all, is in propriety a *double Postulatum*.

The first of these Propositions is, that “ *na-*
 “ *tural or moral Truth does exist in ourselves,*
 “ *being even irradiated upon our Minds from*
 “ *our own cogitative Faculties, in general, and*
 “ *from a Power within ourselves, in special, of*
 “ *considering and comparing the moral Attributes*
 “ *of God with our own reasonable Nature:*”
 So that, it seems, to set up for the Discovery of this principal of all Truths, even *natural* and *moral* Truth, we, little Mortals, are thoroughly furnish'd with *Powers* and *Means* within our-
selves!

selves! Our Irradiation is innate! of our own Fund and Stock! pure Self-irradiation! i. e. Howsoever this were originally a Grant of the Creator to us, yet was it not more than God, in the Nature of Things, was bound to allow us, and the same now descends, as it ought, in course of Nature, to, and is, in a great Measure, propagated in, us.

The other of these Propositions is, that “the
 “ said *innate Truth and Light*, when carefully
 “ and duly attended to, is *superior to reveal’d*;
 “ for why! Truly because it is *that constant*
 “ and *immutable Rule to ev’ry Man, by which he*
 “ is *impower’d to judge of ev’ry Thing possible*
 “ to be known, even of the *Doctrines of the holy*
 “ *Scriptures themselves, whether they come from*
 “ *God, and whether they shall be admitted to*
 “ *contain the Revelation of his Will, or not.*” Now,

These two *natural Propositions*, with the *Reasonings* built upon them, though, my Lord, they are such as the corrupt *Nature* that is in us would purchase but a superficial Persuasion of, at almost any Price; yet do need no more than to be set in a just Light by a clear Representation, to refute them. But I will pay them a little more Respect; and first, for the first;

This, my Lord, is so *new and singular*, that on a Subject of this Nature, the very *Novelty and Singularity* of it, were there nothing else, would be an eternal Objection against it. For, a Power of finding *natural or moral Truth* within ourselves, *inborn and inherent* to us, must be

be *uniform* and *universal*, not only *confess'd*, but also *exerted*, by *all Men* in *all Times* alike. But,

This is so far from being the Case, that of those Men, who are suppos'd to have gone chiefly, or only, by the Guidance of *this natural Light*, I mean the Greek Philosophers, one chief Sect, the *Platonists*, ascrib'd all Wisdom to an *Irradiation from without*, from *their first Cause*, or God ; and, all the others, that varied from them therein, to Philosophy, i. e. to *Art* and *Erudition* : Both Parties honestly confessing, that *Nature* was in this, as in most other instances, a *Step-mother* to Mankind ; Men being by *Nature* so *ting'd with Error* and *Ignorance* (as *Tully* from several of his philosophical Predecessors expresses it) that these seem'd to be *constitutional* to them : And in fact, the wise, and sagacious of that little Share of *moral Truth*, which those *natural Moralizers* boasted to have among them, these, I say, by their own Confession, were *the few*, *one among thirty thousand*, who became such, by Means of their own *extraordinary Observation* and *Industry* ; so that, *this natural Light*, boasted of by our *inventive Writer*, instead of being found in *all Men*, is by the Testimony of *all natural Reasoners* themselves, actually found in *none*. And therefore, may we safely conclude, there is no such Thing.

This Argument must be conclusive to every Body, especially to our Author, with whom it is a *Rule* to argue from *Appearances* to *Facts*, and from *Facts* to *Fitnesses*, *Necessities*, &c. who
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has giv'n up the *Necessity* of a *Revelation* generally to *Mankind*, from some *Appearances* which there are to *him*, that the *Scriptures* have not, in Fact, been generally enough promulged. "Consider, says he, what a Reproach this would be to the *Justice* and *Goodness* of *God*. How partial would it represent him, in not allowing necessary Things for the real *Happiness* of his *Creatures*? For, 'tis certain, *He* never has vouchsafed the *Revelation* of his *Word* but to a very small Parcel of Men, in Comparison of the Bulk of *Mankind*. And what! says he, shall the greatest Part of the *World* be doom'd to eternal *Misery*, for an unavoidable Want of having what was really necessary for procuring their *Happiness*?" You see, my Lord, he supposes the mere *Non-promulgation* of the *Scriptures* to each particular *Man* to be a *Proof* of the *Non-necessity* of the same, generally, to the *Happiness* of *Mankind*; and ventures to raise *Outcries* against the Consequences of their *Necessity* as above suppos'd with such *Non-promulgation*: And, yet, does he not see, that it is an Argument against his suppos'd general *Power* in *Nature* for the Discovery of *moral Truth*; that this is really found in none without *Art* and *Erudition*: Whereas, this kind of Argument, though, by the Way, it is not conclusive against what he urges it, the *Necessity* of a divine *Revelation* to the *Happiness* generally of *Mankind*, is however conclusive against this said natural *Power* by *Self-irradiation*, to

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discover moral Truth. Because, if this Power were in *Nature*, *inborn* and *inherent* to us, it must be actually found in all Men, extended with the Nature of *all* to *every Individual* in whom *the Nature is* : Nor wou'd it in *any* need those Helps of *Art* and *Erudition* : Nay, it would scorn and reject them as *sophisticate* and *corrupt*. While, on the other Hand, *Revelation* may still be *necessary* to the *Happiness* generally of *Mankind*, though not actually promulged to each particular Man : Because, *Revelation* is not, as the said suppos'd *natural Power*, *inborn* and *inherent* in us, but is a *Gift outward* and *adventitious* to ev'ry one of us ; a *Gift*, which having been once granted, may have been since *forfeited* by new *Prevarication* and *Treason*, like that in *Paradise* *tainting the Blood* ; so that, it may still continue in itself necessary, as a Means, to the *Happiness* of all : However, it may be no longer applicable to those Persons in particular, who, with their Title to the *End, Happiness*, must have also lost their Title to the *Means*, the said *divine Revelation*. Besides,

The ingenious Gentleman happens to have set Nature a Task, for which she has plainly no Abilities, i. e. " To consider *the moral Attributes of God, together with Men's own reasonable Nature, and their Dependance upon him.*" For, this again is Work only for Men of Art and Learning, of Study and Reflection. Men must be *taught* a good deal, and *think* a good deal more, before they can frame any System of *divine*, or even of *human Morals* ; much more,

more, before they can *compare* and *make* those *nice Deductions* from both, pointed out by our Author; and, when they have done all, they will commonly *think* a good deal *wrong* upon *both*. In the mean while, what must become of the Rest, the Bulk of Mankind, who have not all that *Learning and Sagacity*, which this Author is so happy as to have found in himself? It is certain, they seldom or never do *know* or think about either of the above-mention'd great Heads of Science; never, at least from this *suppos'd Irradiation of a Man's own Considerations comparing and weighing this learned Gentleman's said Premisses together*. Wherefore, upon the whole,

The Thing speaks itself, that his *suppos'd Skill, or Craft*, of what he calls the *Morale* of our *Nature*, cannot be in Nature; but must be from *Revelation or Tradition, or Study and Erudition, or from a Mixture of all these*. And therefore a wise Man, a great Philosopher, and as sagacious a Naturalist, as any we now have, determin'd against our Author above two thousand Years since, that there is nothing *just* or *unjust, right* or *wrong* by *Nature*, but Things are the *one* or the *other*, as they are decreed so by *Law*, only, *i. e.* There is no *natural moral Science*; Nature of herself does not teach what is *right* or *wrong*, but we want *Erudition and Laws*, to teach us the *difference*. Which in the main, my Lord, is true.

This first Proposition being thus taken away, the other falls of itself: If we have in ourselves no Power to find out *natural* or *moral Truth*, in the Way he *supposes*; but this is only a Chimæra of a learned Brain ascribing its own Researches, the manifest Product of Art and Erudition, to an imagin'd natural Irradiation, which never did, nor ever will exist in any; as not only the *barbarous* and *uneducated* Part of Mankind, but also the *polite* and *educated*, do give abundant Demonstration; then, neither *that* nor any *other* imaginable *Truth* or *Light in us*, or discoverable *by us*, can be superior to reveal'd. The Reason which the inventive Gentleman gives, wherefore the said natural Truth must be superior to reveal'd, is, *because the said natural Truth " is the constant and immutable*
" Rule to every Man, by which he judges of the
" Doctrines of Scripture, whether they do come
" from God, and in what Sense they contain the
" Revelation of his Will. p. 7." But, my Lord,

Neither will this Reason hold: For, Man, as a Creature, (whether consider'd as *fallen*, or *not fallen*) must be *dependent* on his Creator, and, in Comparison of his Creator, *imperfect*. If therefore (besides any *Law* suppos'd to have been *imprinted* on his *imperfect Nature*) the all-perfect Creator has also given him *another reveal'd Law*, from himself; then must such reveal'd Law be superior to his said *natural*, as being deriv'd from the all-perfect Fountain of his

his whole Being, and giv'n him in *Aid* and *Supply* of what was else in him *imperfect* and *defective*. Otherwise, Man should even have no reveal'd Law at all. For, if the Deity interpose, to give Man any such Law, it must be for a Cause worthy of the divine Interposition. But there is no other such Cause, nor indeed any Cause for such Interposition at all, except it be in some Respect to assist or controul, to correct or finish, what was otherwise *defective* and *unfinish'd*, in him. And this, my Lord, of itself speaks Superiority in such Law, so *reveal'd* by the all-perfect Creator to the imperfect Creature, as aforesaid : And therefore, also, the natural imperfect Law before implanted in Man's imperfect Nature, could not be given him for a constant and immutable Rule, whereby to judge of the *perfect revealed* Law given him *since* by God, but must have been given to dispose the Man, by a Law of *Fear* implanted in him with the same, to betake himself without more ado to the Obedience of it, otherwise, every natural Man should have a Power in him above that pretended to by the Pope, even an innate Principle of Infallibility, which would make each Man, after all, not a *Doer* of the *Law*, but a *Judge of both Law and Law-giver*, which is to the last Degree both impious and absurd to imagine. And,

This still further appears, from the Declaration of the reveal'd Law concerning itself ; by the historical Evidence of which, it appears,
that

that the Scriptures were originally prov'd to come from God, not by offering Arguments for themselves to Men's Reasonings; no, but by convincing Evidence to their Senses; and the same being, on such Proof, enter'd of Record, were never, in after Times, any more than at the Beginning, to be submitted to Men's Reasonings, to dispute and judge of their Doctrines, whether they came from God, and in what Sense they contain the Revelation of his Will: By no Means, but being once enter'd, as aforesaid, of Record, by an Authority infinitely superior to Man, and infinitely for Man's Benefit; it is now for ever at their Peril, if they do not receive the same. If it be but a Record of Men duly inroll'd in a proper Court, does any one pretend he is still at Liberty to dispute, and judge, of its Authority? Much more may it be ask'd, will any one who wants to take the Benefit of its Authority for Evidence, in any Matter or Cause depending before a Court of Judicature, be so mad as to go about to depreciate it? And to entertain the Court with his own Reasonings and Harangues, as superior in point of Proof to it, instead of taking the Benefit of it accordingly? And,

Thus the Affair of Revelation in Fact was, and is. *Moses* and all the Prophets, on every Occasion, declar'd their Commission, and deliver'd their Message from God; and, in case of any Dispute about either, gave Demonstrations of both by Miracles, controuling the highest

est settled Powers in Nature, and convincing Opponents, for the most Part, in their Destruction. And the same Course was threatned by *Moses*, against all those who should not submit to Christ, the great Prophet. — *The Lord thy God*, says he, *shall raise up a Prophet unto thee in the Midst of thee, &c. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken to my Words, which he shall speak in my Name, I will require it of him.* Deut. xviii. 15, 19. So our Lord, when he sent out his Disciples, said, — *Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your Words, when ye depart out of that House or City, shake off the Dust of your Feet: Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the Land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment, than for that City.* Here, my Lord, was no Room left for judging and disputing of their *Mission* and *Doctrine*; but, there was to be a *submitting* or *casting down* of *Reasonings*, and of every *high Thing* in Nature, that *exalted itself*, under Peril of *eternal Destruction* to all who did not receive the Disciples of our Lord, and *hear or obey their Words*: And, there has been no *Law* given since for *repeal* of this *divine Statute*, or for *supersedeas* of that *Submission* to *Revelation*, which, without Reserve, is requir'd by it. But,

This after all, my Lord, is but to run a Length of impertinent Disputation in complaisance to an Author. For, there is certainly no *mental Light*, no *Irradiation*, but that which is, originally,

originally, in the *divine Essence*, and, *communicatively*, in *Angels* and *Men*, from *one of the divine Persons*. And, to ascribe *either* to any *other Being*, or *Cause*, as the old Heathens did to *Apollo* or the *solar Light*, or, as the Author and the modern Deists do, to *Nature* and *Mens own Thought and Reflection*; much more, to submit the *divine Revelation* to be *try'd* and *judg'd* by such a *Non-entity* as the said *Light of Mens own Thoughts*, as aforesaid, is as near as possible to a Repetition of *Eve's Transgression*, and one of the highest of Crimes. It follows not, my Lord, that *Reason* is a *Judge* of the *Doctrines* of *Scripture*, whether they come from God, &c. because she *assents* to *Evidence of Sense*, that *Scripture* is *Scripture*. I, for the Purpose, see it *lighten*, and hear it *thunder*, and my *Reason* confirms the Report of my Senses, that it is *Lightning* and *Thunder*, and moreover *distinguishes* of the *Cause*, *Manner*, *Effects*, &c. of the said *Lightning* and *Thunder*, but surely my Reason is not for this to be said to *judge* whether it be *Lightning* and *Thunder*, or not; much less, is my said Reason to contradict the Evidence of *my Senses*, and, from some whimsical Reasonings of her own, to carry and place me, where I shall be in some more imminent Danger of being destroy'd by it; would not Men with such Reason so abus'd to fool themselves, be in a much worse State even than Brutes?

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Having thus taken away the *two Propositions*, of which this double *Postulatum* (whereon our Author has built almost his whole Work) does consist; I may here make an End, having however in a readiness to give your Lordship, whenever you shall command them, other Remarks, which I have already drawn up at length on most of the Errors following to the End of this Piece. In the mean time,

I cannot but observe, what a deplorable State we are brought into, when Men, otherwise of fine Talents and great Accomplishments, in all the now *fashionable*, however *corrupt* Parts of Learning, and seemingly of benign Manners, do suffer themselves to be carried with a Set of unmeaning *Terms*, *Phrases*, and *Propositions*, originally borrowed from the Heathens, and since more and more depraved by Misapplication of Believers, to the introducing of every Affirmation of Impiety, as far as to Atheism and Blasphemy itself. Among those Terms and Propositions I reckon *these*, viz. that God is a *necessarily* existing Being, i. e. that *Necessity*, though not the *Cause* of his Being, is the *Reason* of it; that, in the Mind of God, the Ideas of all *Things* and of all the *Relations* of those *Things* one to another, do exist; that, there is an eternal Concatenation of Fitnesses subsisting in these *Ideas* in the Mind of God, and that God must act by them; that all Truths are as eternal and immutable as the Ideas of the Things themselves; that there is a natural Difference betwixt Things,

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by which God himself is determin'd to chuse either right or wrong; that God is a *moral Agent* as *we are*, else *he*, no *more than we*, could chuse or refuse right or wrong; that this Truth, that God is an absolutely perfect *moral Agent* or *Being*, and must act as aforesaid, is the *first Truth in Religion*: Whence also are deduc'd those Limitations of the Eternal and Omnipotent, *viz.* that *he cannot do this*, and that *he must do that*: And, all, by the warp'd and perverted Rule of our *Morals in this fallen and corrupt State*; that there is a certain fundamental *Law of Nature, Religion of Nature, &c.* that *this, or that Thing*, which *this or that Man* happens to *imagine*, is *eternal and immutable Truth*, discoverable by the *Light of the Man's own Thought and Consideration*; that all Men, *Believers and Infidels*, indifferently, have Strength in their own mere *natural Powers*, for carrying them forward to such a Degree of *Perfection*, as shall make them *capable and deserving of adequate Degrees of Happiness in another Life*; the only Difference being, that the Rewards of the *latter*, should sometime perhaps have an End, whereas those of the former are to be *eternal*; and, lastly, that Man, after his Fall, had Powers still left to do *his best*; and, that God cannot require *any more of him*.

Hereto we may refer those corrupt Distinctions, of *natural and reveal'd Religion*, of *moral and positive Laws and Duties*; and of an *Excellency in those above these*; so of *speculative*
and

and *practical*. With *these*, and other *Whimsies* of like Kind and Conceit, partly *Heathenish*, partly *heretical*, Believers have being furnishing Infidels and Atheists, though unwittingly, with Reasonings against the Truth ; till, betwixt *In-vaders* on the one hand, and *Betrayers* on the other, that terrible Prediction of our Lord, concerning the religious State of the World in general at his second Coming to Judgment, is already nigh verified upon our Age and Nation ; so that, if he should come to visit for our Sins, he would scarce find any *Remains of his Faith* left among us. How far, with all their late Flourishes upon *Morality*, our People are improv'd in their Loyalty and Allegiance to the King, and in their common Morals one towards another, since the Introduction of these strange Opinions and Tenets, so subversive of all *religious*, and consequently, of all *civil* Order among us, the whole World is Witness.

We do indeed find *Nature, Necessity or Fate, Ideas, eternal Series of Fitnesses subsisting in Ideas ; different Durations of Reward in another Life*, by *Metempsychoses*, &c. every where making Part of the *Platonists* and other Heathens Philosophy and Theology : and, reason good as to those Men, since *that Nature, that Necessity or Fate*, and *those Ideas*, with them, were *Deities*, or a kind of divine *Existences* : And, *human Souls*, as being suppos'd to have been Part of the *Substance of their Gods, the Heavens, Sun, Stars, &c.* were, according to them, re-

funded back after Death into their said *Gods the Heavens*, the *Æther*, the Stars, &c. from whence they were to be detach'd anew, to animate other Bodies here on Earth, and so on, in an almost eternal Revolution of *Metempsychoses*. But, what, my Lord, are all these Chimæra's to us Christians? Are we still to be inform'd, that these *Heathen Fables* and *Dreams*, like their *Idols*, are *nothing in the World* but *empty Names*? Shall any of us be so lost, I will not say to Reason, but to common Sense, as to harp still upon them as *Realities*? Nay, to make them such *essential Beings*, as with them to *controul, limit, and give Law to God himself*? Thus far many have gone; and they can go no further, unless it be to open and avow'd Apostasy: And I am not sure, that avoiding that, and covering themselves with a Cloke of *Evasions*, pretending Honour to God, Love of Mankind, Regard to *moral Virtue*, &c. be not even much worse than such open Apostasy; while Men, by those Means setting up more imperceptibly their own Imaginations out of number, instead of the *one* only Method of Salvation *given*, and reveal'd by God, do in reality both the more Dishonour to God, and the more Despite to Mankind; they do more effectually subvert Religion, corrupt Morality, and seduce and destroy Mankind.

These few Notes, my Lord, though writ with *that Spirit of Zeal*, which, I hope, on such Occasions as this, I shall *ever exert*, for the Honour of God and his Word; are yet, at
the

the same time dictated by the Rules sketch'd out by the Author. For first, they are not clogg'd with that which is so much the Author's Aversion, which he calls *learned Rubbish*. Secondly, I can assure your Lordship, they are penn'd in the Spirit of *Meekness* and *Good-will*. And thirdly, they are fetch'd from *Reason* and *Scripture* only: I mean from the *Reason of Scripture only*. For, in treating on religious Subjects, I allow of no *other Reason* or *Reasoning*, than that which flows *from* or does *depend upon*, some *Reason of Scripture*: The least Sentence of Scripture, well understood and rightly apply'd, being of more Weight with me, than *ten thousand Volumes* of *Reasonings* borrowed from the *Heathens*, or *invented by Gentlemen*, if possible, more in the *reasoning Taste* than this *most reasoning Author*.

If what I have here presum'd to lay before your Lordship, should by any means come to the Author's Hands, I sincerely wish and pray, it may also reach and touch his Heart.

Your Lordship will excuse this Trouble, and believe me to be, as an inferior Clergyman, with all that Regard which is due to your Station and Character, and, as a Christian, with much nobler Respects,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's humble Servant,

B. H.

A few

A few other REMARKS on a Pamphlet
intituled, *The Morality of Religion*,
&c. to be added to a Letter to * * *.

THE Author of the above-mention'd Pamphlet, p. 8. says, " God is the only
" necessarily-existing Being." And, then, adds a Piece of *Platonism* exploded by all good Christians, as false and heretical, *viz.* " That in the Mind of God all the Ideas of all
" Things do exist, with all the Relations and
" Proportions of those Things one to another ;
" and that thus all Truths are as necessary,
" eternal, and immutable as the Ideas of Things
" themselves." Yea, say I, and (if this be the case) of all Untruths too, of which there are any Ideas, the Ideas of these (Untruths) subsisting in the same manner in God's Omniscience as the Ideas of the said Truths do. From all which will follow this Piece of Self-Contradiction to the Author, *viz.* that God is not the only necessarily-existing Being, (as he sets out with telling us) but, that there are other Beings necessarily-existing besides God, even *these* Ideas of Things, with their *Concatenations* and *Fitnesses*, their Relations, Proportions, Dependencies ; & *contra*, even of Truths and Untruths, Goods and Evils, and consequently the said Truths and Untruths, Goods and Evils, themselves. For among his Truths, I suppose,
are

are the Facts and Events which *are, have been,* and *are to be*; all which, according to this Author, always necessarily did exist in the divine Mind, as they *were to be*, and so likewise, always *necessarily were to be*, even as *they are*, &c. From whence again will flow these abominable Corollaries:

1st, That Creation itself was not a free, but a necessary Act of the Deity. And,

2dly, That Evil, as well as Good, is from God.

In the same Page he tells us, "This Truth, that God is, is the first Truth in Reason, though we should reason from the Effects to the Cause, to find this out." He must mean, that this Truth is the first in Excellency: for, the first in order to reason it cannot be, if we reason, as he says, from other Things, to find out this. To this, he adds, "That God is a moral Agent, is the first Truth in Religion." But I am not sure that this is the first, or last, or any Truth at all, in Religion. For the Scriptures have told us, that *Jehovah, our Elohim, is one Jehovah*: But, what an Agent he is, they have not told us; this is even what we cannot be told, because we cannot comprehend it; for that, his *Greatness*, his *Judgments*, and his *Doings* are *unsearchable*, and his *Ways* or *Manner of Agency* *past finding out*. Therefore, for the Knowledge of God, his *Essence*, his *Powers* and *Manner of Agency*, we are referr'd to his *Word* and *Works*, and to his *Names* in the said Word revealed to us: among all which *moral Agent* is not one. If it be said, that Reason

son hath thus describ'd him: I must return, that That is a most presumptuous and petulant Reason, which shall pretend to tell what God *is*, in spite of his own express Declarations concerning himself, that he is inscrutable (to Reason) wonderful in Counsels, excellent in Working, fearful in Praises, doing Wonders. But, not a tittle of our Author's low Character of *moral Agent* !

He next talks, that " God has a natural
" Power to chuse either Good or Evil; and,
" that he cannot but chuse either the one or the
" other, and act accordingly; his Agency im-
" plying Choice and Will, and a Freedom of do-
" ing or not doing what is right and fit." But,

This is no Part of God's excellent and essential *Freedom*. For as God, by the infinite Perfection and Purity of his Essence, is only and altogether good; so is it *essential* to him to do only and altogether what is *right* and *fit*. He cannot be said to *chuse* this, or that: Because *Choice* in this case implies Deliberation, and weighing of Motives, *pro* and *con*, which again do imply Imperfection; which cannot, without Blasphemy, be said to be in God. To *chuse either Good or Evil*, is only what God has set before his rational and spiritual Creatures, Angels and Men, for Trial of their Faith and Obedience, but is nothing to *himself*, their infinite and all perfect Creator and Sovereign.

To this Stuff, he adds a two-fold Comparison of the Omnipotent and Unsearchable, with us impotent and polluted Worms, *viz.*

1st, That if “ God did not always prefer
 “ what is *right* and *fit*, there could be no Reason,
 “ why we should do it; nor could we be
 “ call’d to an Account, for not doing it.” And,
 2^{dly}, That “ There is a natural Difference
 “ in Things, which is the necessary Reason of
 “ his Choice; or else, he, no more than we,
 “ could be said to choose Right or Wrong.”
 To which he subjoins—Thus “ God acts, and
 “ cannot but do so, from the Excellency of his
 “ Nature.” All which is a *Cinnus* of incon-
 nected Words, and full of Self-contradictions.
 But,

To go with him, in the best Manner the
 thorny Way he takes will permit, I here re-
 ply, That if there be such a natural Difference
 in Things, as shall be a *Reason*, even a *necessary*
Reason of God’s Choice; then, have the Things
 something in them, which they did not receive
 from God, that makes them eternal; nay, and
 in some Respects, even prior and superior to
 God himself. But, then, where is the God?
 Certainly not in God; but in that natural Dif-
 ference in the Things which is so directive, and
 does so give Law, to God. Or, if, on the other
 Hand,

The Things have nothing that God did not
 give them, nor any Thing that can be directive
 to him; and, if, besides all this, God is as much
 above all Choice in this Affair of Good and
 Evil, as he is above all Temptation to evil (as
 the Case certainly is) what then must become
 of the Author’s Comparisons, of our *Acts* and

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Options

Options with the Reason of *God's*? and, of our being acceptable or not acceptable accordingly? As if there still were something exterior to the Deity that he did not make or give, which must, for this fine Reason, be a Law to us, because, truly, the same is a Law to him? But,

The reasoning Gentleman here throws in a kind of Distinction, *viz.* That "*Necessity* is " no more the Cause of God's moral Agency, " than it is of his Existence, but only the *Reason* of it. Because, says he, supposing him " the first Cause, he can have no Cause prior to " Himself."

Of these two Sentences, the latter tells us a great Secret, *viz.* that what is supposed to be first, is supposed to have nothing before it. And the former makes a Distinction without a Difference; the Words expressing or implying, that *Necessity* is the Reason of God's *Existence*, as it is of his *acting*, though it be not the *Cause* of either. But,

If *Necessity* be the *Reason* of either, or both, I know not how any Man will understand it not to be the *Cause* of either, or both. For,

If there be a *Necessity* in the *natural Difference of Things*, which is the Reason of God's *Agency*, then is there a Reason in the Things prior to his Reason; which is the same as to say, there is a Reason that is prior to himself. And supposing such *Reason*, it will be hard to tell, how the *Causality* our Author would distinguish, can be separated from it. However, I hope, it is full as good a Supposition to suppose,

pose, that, if the Reason of God's Agency be the first Reason, he can then have no *Reason* of his *Agency* prior to his own : As that, if he be the *first Cause*, he can have no *Cause* prior to *Himself*. Though I humbly desire, the Proof of God's prime *Causality* and *Reason of acting*, may not be supposed to depend upon the Supposition of our reasoning Author, or any other Reasoner's whatever. But to return,

I do not remember, nor concern myself, how those, who have been of late call'd Philosophers, have stated or describ'd, what they call God's *necessary Existence* : All that can be said on this Subject, being but an unintelligible Jingle of Words, with great Appearance of Learning at the Surface, though void of all common Sense, at the Bottom. But I suppose, the Rest, as this Author does, make *Necessity* the *Reason* of his *Existence* ; that *God is*, because *he must be*. But how do they ascend to know that God, as they say, *must be* ? Why, truly, by this mighty Step, that if God were not, nothing could be : That is, they can see Things are, and thence conclude (as they say) there must be a first *Cause* : Or else what would follow, but that the Things which are, could not have been effected ? Now, admitting for the present, that Men of themselves could or would reason thus, yet plain it is, this *Necessity* or *Mustness* rests after all, in the Things that are effected or caus'd, and touches not God, the Cause, but comparatively and respectively, *i. e.* by a Necessity only of *Inference* or *Induction*, to us,

and no more. As, because there are Creatures, we know there must be a Creator ; or, in other Words much more proper, we are hereby sure, there is a Creator. But, how is this *argumentative Mustness* to us, in any Kind or Degree the Reason of the Creator's Existence? For, take away the Creatures from whose Being this *argumentative Mustness* does arise ; or even suppose, they had never been, yet would the Creator have existed in his *Essence*, though not in that *Relation of Creator* : And therefore, a *Necessity* thus argued by one of us, from the Being of the Creatures, can never be a Reason of the Being or *Existence* of the *Creator*. In a Word,

The Terms—is, and must be, are disparate ; the former being absolute and simple ; the latter relative and comparative only ; wherefore the latter never can be the Reason of the former. To suppose that, is inverting the fundamental Order of Things, and making the Effects in the End to be the Reasons of their own Causes. For the Purpose, I see a Watch and conclude rightly, there *must of Necessity* have been a Watchmaker. But, this *must*, is only a *Mustness* of *Assurance* or *Certainty* to me ; but is nothing at all to the Watchmaker : I know, or am assured by what I see, that there certainly is, or was, such *Maker*, whom I see not : But I hope, this *Mustness* of *Assurance* to me, will not be put upon the *Watchmaker* for the necessary Reason of his *Being*, as a *Watchmaker* ; much less, of his *Being* as a *Man* : For, he was a *Watchmaker*, suppose 20 Years, and a *Man*,

30; before this small Machine was made. And, the Reason of his Being, as a Man, was the Creator's good Pleasure to *create* and *frame* him so: as was that of his *Being*, as a Watchmaker, the Provision of his Friends, or his own Choice determining him to that Profession, his being bound Apprentice; serving his legal Time to the Business; receiving his Indentures, Money, Instruments, &c. to set up the said Trade with. But,

This is an Ocean that the Reason of Man may not presume to launch into. For, certainly, to determine what God *must be*, or what *must be* the Reason of his Being or Acting; and, that any Thing without himself, *is*, or *can be*, the Reason of either, must be a most dangerous and impious Presumption. And though I am by no Means attempting any Thing of this Kind myself, but only to expose the bold Undertakings of others in this Way, I cannot help imploring the divine Mercy and Forgiveness, that, but for *approaching the Tents of these wicked Men*, and *touching any Thing of theirs*, *I be not consumed in all their Sins*. I will therefore only here beg leave to add a Word to our Author, that supposing (as he supposes) a Necessity resulting from the natural Constitution and Difference of Things, to be the *Reason of God's moral Agency*, is to suppose a Fatality in Nature, to which God is subject: Which is rank Stoicism. A Creed, which in it's Day was well enough perhaps for Stoicks: When the Generality of the Heathen World held Jupiter, or the Air, the Fire or Light, for the chief God;

God; but the Stoicks among others, thought they discerned another universal Power in *Nature*, to which *Jupiter* and each Power in special, was subject; which universal Power they call'd *Necessity*, or *Fate*. But, what can this have to do with *Jehovah*, the Creator and Lord of their *Jupiter*, and their *Nature*? Who also has taught us, that all Dispensations and Appointments are absolutely *free* to himself; as also, that, to us, there is nothing *necessary* but *his Decrees*.

A little lower he says, "God being an absolutely moral Being, or perfectly and infinitely wise, good, just, and holy by Reason and Choice," &c. Inconsistently with himself again! For just now, *a natural Difference in Things* was the *Reason*, even the *necessary Reason* of his *Agency*! Where then is his Choice?

In the same Page he states the Duties which he says "God must require from all his rational Creatures according to the Nature and Faculties which he hath given to each"—in a Manner altogether unscriptural and wrong: As that, "of Creatures in a perfect State, he absolutely requires Perfection; but, that he cannot require a sinful Creature to be absolutely sinless, or an imperfect Creature to be absolutely perfect: For, this their Natures do not admit of: It is therefore sufficient, if they but approach as near as they are able to Sinlessness and perfection." To which strange Positions it is to be answered in brief, That,

If a Creature were originally made sinless and as perfect as such Creature could be made, then
would

would God require that he should continue so: Or if he fell from that State, then would God have other Reasons and Laws, by which to act with him. It is certain the Creature in such fallen State would not have the Privilege to be indulged with, I know not what Grains of Allowance insinuated by our Author, as if he had not made himself sinful and imperfect, but as if God had form'd him so.

Moreover, God requires *Truth in the inward Parts*. He will have Men to be as they were, or as they were to have been, holy, perfect, &c. and will, finally, make them so. Or if they do resist or refuse his Grace, do think it sufficient to be, as they are fallen, and to go on with the Talents they have from this *fallen* and corrupt *Nature* only; he will then give them up to their own reprobate Minds, and finally destroy them. Then,

As for the Author's *Good-man* p. 11. as he characterizes him upon the Foot of the Man's own Performances, whether he be a *Christian, Jew, or Gentile*; Scripture tells us *There is none that doth Good, no not one*. And for his *eternal Nature of Things*, I desire to be inform'd—*what* and *where* is the *eternal Nature of temporary Things*. Besides, the Nature of Things that now is, is so far short of any Appearance of *eternal*, that it is comparatively but of yesterday, and was also introduced by a *Change of Nature* from what *Nature* was originally made to be. Lastly,

As for his *fundamental Law of Nature* (ibid.) which he makes to give Law to God; of which

he says—" God himself cannot give any *positive*
 " *Law*, nor any reveal'd *Dispensation of Grace*,
 " that shall make any *Change* in this *fundamental*
 " *Law*." This, like all the Rest, is presumptuous Imagination, and borders hard upon Blasphemy. The true *fundamental Law of Nature*, with respect of the Affair he is here treating on, is—*The Soul that sinneth it shall die*,—Except God himself of Grace restore it— And—*God hath* (in respect of Men's Works) *concluded all under Sin*—that he might have Mercy upon all, through Faith in a Saviour.—So, the Author's *first Law of natural Fittestness and Proportions* going, God's suppos'd "First Covenant of Rewards in another Life proportion'd to Men's Virtues in this, taking in the (Jewish, Heathen or other) Motives of each with respect to their actings here;" goes with it; together with all his other Consequences drawn from the same.

In the two next Pages he has several other shocking Assertions to the same Purpose, as, that " to Creatures approaching as near as they can to Perfection, in the State and Circumstances God's Providence has plac'd them, God cannot, but, by the original Constitution of Things, have annex'd proportionable Rewards: And Men who do thus act, let them live under what Degree of natural Light soever; or under what other gracious Dispensation, vouchsafed to them, this Author, as above, calls good; and decides against God, that God never could, nor can, but make such Men
 " happy."

"happy." For says our fine Gentleman, "to
 "do otherwise, would be to alter the Nature of
 "Things, which he pronounces to be eternal
 "and immutable." To which he adds, as if *he*
had known the Mind of the Lord, and had ever
been his Counsellor! That "Men were always
 "destin'd to be happy in the other World, in
 "Proportion to their Virtues in this, taking
 "along with them their several Motives and
 "Means of acting" as aforesaid: Which nat-
 "ural Law being according to our Author,
 "eternal and immutable, no positive Institution
 "or reveal'd Religion can be given, that shall
 "any way infringe the Rights of it; for that,
 "this is, as aforesaid, the *First Covenant* to
 "which all *revealed Covenants* are but *second*
 "or *subordinate*, so that, whatsoever Revela-
 "tion has been since given, it still leaves Men
 "as they were created, to act, and be tried by
 "the said Law of Nature; neither is any re-
 "vealed Law to be any farther accounted for
 "by them, than (as all the Gifts of God are)
 "as they make a good or bad use of it." He
 means towards assisting them, as far as it may,
 to fulfil *his* royal Law of Nature, p. 13, 21.
 So the *revealed Law* is an Underworker to the
natural.

I could be well content to try the Craft of
 the subtlest Spinner of Cobweb-arguments, that
 I now know living in the Kingdom, to come to
 a thorough sifting of these Assertions. But my
 Design, at present, being not to run out so far,
 I shall content myself with observing, that,

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Men

Men who set up to be Reasoners, that is, who do follow their own Imaginations out of number, to dispute concerning Scripture without Scripture, have been of late accustom'd more than ever, first to forge within themselves certain Reasons wherefore some Things should be so or so, for that, they conceive certain other Things related to the former, are so or so, in Nature. From whence (as they imbib'd at School that this Nature is a kind of Paramount) they come at length to conclude, that the God of the Scriptures (of whom they have heard something since) must, or cannot but act according to those imagin'd Laws of their God or Goddess of the Classics, Nature. But, how if those Reasons prove upon Examination all to be wrong? If Things in Nature are really quite otherwise than they have all along imagin'd, as in fact they always are, when Men set themselves to reason about Nature, without Consideration at the same time had of the Fall of Man, and its Consequences; what then must become of all their *necessary Limitations* of the Almighty by them spun out of such Imaginations? Do not these fall to the Ground also, and leave the said Reasoners guilty of a most presumptuous Attempt, for which, I confess, I want a Name? Let others, that can find one, give it.

Whatever Men do, or can, talk of Reason, the first Reason to Creatures is the Reason of the all-wise and powerful Creator's Wisdom
and

and Will. And to make any Reason of the divine Agency prior to God's own absolutely free Reason of acting, I mean, to his infinite and all-comprehensive Wisdom, is the same as to make either a superior Power, or a prior Cause: For, it is the divine Reason or Wisdom carried into Act, that must be the Cause of every Thing that was, and is, good, and right, and fit. For if there were a Reason of God's Agency prior to his own, the same must also be a Cause at least in Authority and Operation prior to himself. Moreover,

As the divine Wisdom carried into Act, is both the Cause and Reason of every Thing that is right and fit; so, the Abuse of this, by the Creatures, brought in Depravity and Obliquity into the World; from which once introduc'd, they are no more able, by any Law or Powers of Nature, to restore themselves to be again as they ought to be, than they were originally able to make themselves as they were made.

Upon the whole of the above Remarks, I will here point out a few Queries, to which my Reader may get the Author to give him satisfactory Answers, if he can. And,

1st, Query, Where, and from whence, is the eternal Nature of temporary Things?

2d, What, and how, is the immutable Law of Nature in that pretended eternal Difference of Things? Is it inherent in the Things and independent of the Deity? Whence is this independency? And how did the Creatures

by it ? And, does not vesting the Creatures with such Independency, imply a manifest Contradiction, *viz.* that the Creatures are not Creatures ?

3d, How can the Author separate and distinguish the Reason of God's Existence from the Cause of it ? And is it not to the last Degree impious, to talk at all of either Reason or Cause of God's Existence or Acts ? For if God's Counsels and Acts are the Reason or Cause of all other Beings and Acts, (except as has been above excepted for the Origin of Evil) how can any thing in them be either Reason or Cause of his Being and Acts ? Can the Operations and Effects act backward, so as to become the Reason or Cause of that which is the Reason and Cause of themselves ? Can the Branches bear the Root ? Or Children become Parents to their Ancestors ?

4th, What is this Necessity ? Is it any thing besides ? or, nothing but a Name ? And, where does it subsist, that we may know where to find, and pay it proper Acknowledgments ? For, if it be any thing more than a Name, and be also a Reason of the Acts of God, it must then be something very high, even another God, nay superior in Authority even to the acting God : As the *Stoicks* make their Fate ; and the *Platonists* in effect make their Ideas, as existing according to them, from all Eternity, in the Mind of their first Cause, and operating from it not spontaneously, but by a Law of inherent and necessary Emanation, which they suppos'd the *supreme* himself could not restrain or withhold.

But

But if, after all, the *Necessity* we talk of be nothing but a *Name*, it can, then, have no Properties, nor any Existence ; and so talking about it, is talking about nothing. And,

In truth, this *Necessity* is nothing at all to God ; and, to us is but a Term or Name put abusively for that Species of reflex Proof, which we have, (as I observ'd above) from some Things and Acts about and near ourselves, of some other Things and Acts above, or at a distance from ourselves. *Necessity*, if it were any Thing, must be with Existence, Powers, Operations. But where, and whence, is its Existence ? Its Names in Heathen *Greek* (for the Scriptures both *Greek* and *Hebrew* know it not) are ἀνάγκη *Compulsion*, and εἰσαγμένη or μοῖρα *Distribution*. But what is this to God ? Is there any thing that is *compulsive* or *distributive* to him ? Nay, where ? how ? and by what Means is it either of these to us ? It is indeed by no means either. What is it then ? Why, a Thing *must of necessity be* so or so, because some Men reasoning about it, know not how it can be otherwise : Or, it *is*, because they fancy *they are sure it is*. So the divine Omnipotence (which is Freedom absolute and essential) is given to a mere nothing : Nay, O Contradiction of Contradictions ! to a non-existing *Necessity*. And, all, because Men will reason upon Imaginations, without Evidence or Information ; will rebel against the Light ; refuse to attribute to God Things that are God's ;
will

will be Leaders of others, though blind themselves, and sacrifice to their own Pride.

I will conclude with repeating again, that this long exploded and now lately reviv'd Heathen *Necessity*, is, like the Heathen Idols, nothing in the World, but a Species of Evidence for Certainty of Conclusion from an Effect to its Cause, and is, in the mean time, nothing at all to the Cause, but a Proof only to us, that the Cause is, or, that we may be assur'd there is such a Cause. So, farewell their formal Volumes of elaborate Impertinencies, pretending to furnish Arguments for the Being and Attributes of God *a priori*, from Necessity! Those Arguments being, when rightly distinguish'd, the most *a posteriori* of any even the last and lowest of all. To say nothing here, that this Species of Proof from Effects, is not, perhaps, deducible from the same by the Light of Nature, but is owing to other Helps and Lights.

The above Remarks, with the Heads of the Letter to * * * to which they do refer, were drawn up soon after the publishing of the *Morality of Religion*, and for the most part, struck out in short, on the Margin of that Pamphlet, together with several others on other Parts of the same; by which every Pin in the Frame of that strange Work is taken out, and the Ignorance and Vanity of the Author on every Point, shewn; which said farther Remarks will be ready also, on occasion, to be produc'd.

F I N I S.

